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ABSTRACT

Relating historical conflicts between Indians and whites, the document explained how education was originally aimed at "civilizing" and domesticating the Canadian Indian. This philosophy, used extensively by church groups that established the original Indian schools, alienated children from both the white society and the educational process. Residential schools were run as regimented orphanages; day schools and boarding homes isolated the students in a strange and often hostile world. The present changing attitude toward Indian education, whose main thrust is the integration of Indian and white students, has resulted in some favorable changes, such as the establishment of kindergarten and preschool care. The continuing high Indian dropout rate, however, indicated that much more needed to be done. (KM)

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THE COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF INDIAN EDUCATION

By Gerda Kaegi

Graphic by Terry Bigwin

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A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF INDIAN EDUCATION

by Gerda Kaegi
Graphics by Terry Bigwin

Before discussing Indian education it would be appropriate to mention a few basic facts which concern the Indian people in Canada.

There are ten major linguistic groups among the Indian people and each one consists of one to fourteen related languages. There are distinct cultural differences between many of the various tribes.

The Indian people live both on and off reserve lands. Some reserves are only a few acres in size with only a few residents, while others are several hundred thousand acres with several thousand residents. Some of these reserve lands are found close to urban centers while others are remote and isolated from the rest of Canadian society.

Indians live in all regions of Canada and are therefore taught in either the English or French language. In a few localities instruction is some classes is given in the native language, and in other places the native language is being taught. This development is not widespread yet. The vast majority belong to one of five Christian religious organizations; Anglican, Roman Catholic, United Church, Presbyterian and Baptist.

There are over 240,000 Status Indians (see Indian Act) and they comprise the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population.

BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN EDUCATION

It is possible to discern three distinct chapters in the development of Indian education in Canada; "Before the whiteman," "Pre-confederation" and "Post-confederation". One might hope that a new chapter has begun, a chapter with a happier ending than those that have preceeded it. Let us now take a brief look at the history of Indian education.

Before the whiteman

The Indian has been on this continent for over 4,000 years. In that period, until the coming of the whiteman, the Indian people had developed their own cultures and traditions and these had been developed and passed on from generation to generation. The young learned "by word of mouth" and by the example of their elders. One of the most important lessons young Indians learned was how to live in tune with nature, and, therefore, how to survive in the vast wilderness. The whiteman has a long tradition of pitting himself against nature; nature, to him, is something to be conquered and controlled.

There were many great leaders among the Indian people, and all the children learned about their distinct history, traditions and religious beliefs through stories told to them by their elders. Each tribe had its own unique identity and history.

Pre-Confederation: 1763-1830

It is perhaps hard to believe that for many years after the British won control of Canada, Indian education was under the control of the military. The overall responsibility remained in the hands of the Imperial Government in England,

1763-1830 (cont.)

but the day-to-day control and responsibility belonged to the military authorities in the colonies. Therefore it is not very surprising to discover that very little was done to develop educational programs, for the major concern in this period was the security of the British Colonies.

Some steps were taken by missionaries to establish schools. A few Indian leaders also struggled to provide education for their people. One of the most famous of these leaders was a British Army Captain, Chief Joseph Brant. (The Ontario city of Brantford bear his name). In 1785 Chief Brant had arranged that a school and the money to pay a teacher were provided for the Iroquois "Loyalists" settled in the Grand River valley in what was then Upper Canada. In a few other instances small grants of money were provided for the purpose of "Indian education" by either the Imperial Government or the colonial administrations.

It is important to realize that the education that was provided was, in almost all cases, in the system and traditions of the whiteman. The Indian people were almost never consulted, for they were believed to be too "child-like" and thus incapable of knowing what was 'best' for their children. The education of the Indian children was carried on by "outsiders"; people from an alien cultural tradition.

> "It was directed in the terms of the life and society of the whiteman." (1)

Before turning to the latter half of the "pre-confederation" period there was one development that should be mentioned In 1824 the Government of Upper Canada decided that Indian schools <u>should</u> be eligible for government grants of funds.

(1) <u>A survey of the contemporary Indians of Canada</u>, Part 2 p.166.

1830-1867

The year 1830 should have marked a significant change in Indian Affairs. In that year the responsibility for 'Indian Affairs' passed from the hands of the military into those of the Government of Upper Canada.

By 1848, after a series of long negotiations, a fund was established that was to be used for Indian education. However, this was not a new source of revenue for the Indians, but was simply a re-allocation of money already allotted to Indian Affairs.

In the years following, and up to 1867, several colonial governments passed legislation dealing with aspects of Indian education. Some provided for the establishment of Indian schools or for Indian children to attend schools that had been provided for non-Indians. Generally they also made some provision for the financing of Indian education with special, or additional, government funds. Though the legislation was essentially good and should have provided for a sound development of Indian educational facilities, in fact very little was accomplished.

> "There was no widespread concern for the Indian people among the local residents and the new nation was too occupied with other matters. In a few instances where the population was sparse, the enrolment of Indian pupils was essential to the establishment of provincial schools and this did lead to limited acceptance of them in the common schools but as these areas became more heavily settled, the Indians became a less significant part of the population and were no longer needed or welcomed." (2)

Post-Confederation

Before looking at the steps taken by the Governments in Canada in dealing with the matter of Indian education it is crucial to understand one very important development that

(2) Education for Indian children in Canada, The Canadian Superintendent 1965. p.4.

Post-Confederation (cont.)

arose from the writing of the British North America Act of 1867. Under the terms of this Act Indians were declared to be the responsibility of the Federal Government in Ottawa (Section 91, sub-section 24). This fact alone should not have been harmful to the native people of Canada, but it was. As Canada grew and government activity expanded to meet the demands of the citizens, there were frequent clashes between the Federal and Provincial governments over the question of government powers. Which government had the power to enact laws in certain areas? Was this power an exclusive one? The idea slowly grew, as a result of a long series of court cases, that the British North America Act had separated the different areas of responsibility into "water-tight compartments". This meant that governments were thought to have an exclusive power to deal with the matters listed in sections 91 and 92 of the British North America Act. Under section 93, education was named as a responsibility of the provinces. Section 91 had listed Indians as a Federal responsibility. The provinces believed, quite incorrectly, that, since these lists were supposedly exclusive, they had no right or duty to concern themselves with Indian education.

There was another factor that complicated the picture for the Indian people even further. There was no clear cut definition, in the public's mind at least, as to who was an Indian. The Indian Act of 1876 and its successors referred to those native people who were either 'registered' or 'entitled to be registered' as Indians. This definition did not cover all the people of Indian ancestry, and yet provincial and local governments were inclined to view <u>all</u> Indians as an exclusively Federal responsibility. Furthermore, most Canadians fail to realize even today that the native people pay most provincial taxes. Only Indians living on reserves and earning their living there are exempted from

Post-Confederation (cont.)

paying either income tax or property tax on their reserve lands. They do pay all other forms of taxes such as sales taxes etc. There is therefore no really valid reason for the Indian to be excluded from provincial services.

By the end of the nineteenth century the attitude of the Government in Ottawa towards the native people had become increasingly paternalistic. Very little power to deal with schooling was left in the hands of the Indian Band Councils, and more authority was placed with the government department that had been especially created to deal with "Indian Affairs". It was this Federal Department that made the decisions concerning admission requirements; the spending of funds for schooling and so on. The Indian Advancement Act of 1894 granted the Government authority to establish boarding or industrial schools to which Indian children "could be committed by Justices or Indian Agents"[(3)] up to the age of eighteen. There was little or no interest shown in the education of children living at home on the reserves. It wasn't until 1961 that the Federal Government really concerned itself with the educational needs of children of Kindergarten age.

In 1951 the Federal Government encouraged provincial involvement by making it legally possible for provincial and local educational authorities to negotiate agreements permitting the education of Indian citizens in their schools.

In closing one further point should be made. Until 1945, there was little concern on the Government's part over problems of Indian education. It was principally the Indians who lived in or near the settled areas of Canada who managed to acquire, against great odds, some degree of education. Further-

(3) The Education of Indian children in Canada, p.5.

more, most of the Indian schools were run by religious groups and generally there was a lack of funds; standards were low; and the Indians themselves were rarely consulted as to their wishes or desires. In contrast this was usually not the situation for non-Indian families.

THE BASIC PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

What does an Indian child face when he enters school? Why are his challenges uniquely different from those faced by most other Canadian children? Let us look at the basic philosophy that has dominated the whole area of Indian education up to the present time, and then consider what it should have been.

The earliest efforts of educating the Indians were based on a goal or philosophy that has persisted for almost 300 years. In 1668 King Louis XIV of France encouraged the clergy of his colony of New France to persuade the Indians, by means of education, to give up their traditional way of life, to become "civilized" and to adopt the ways of Frenchmen. The culture, traditions, values and ideals of the Indian people were despised or ignored. The Indian was to be assimilated or absorbed into the dominant society and its culture. They were to give up their ways for those of the whiteman.

In 1847 Dr. Ryerson, the Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada wrote in a report that the object of Indian schooling should be to equip the pupils to be farmers and farm workers. He stressed the necessity for Christian religious instruction to enable the Indian to be "civilized" and for his character to be improved. The Indian was viewed as a piece of clay to be molded in the shape desired by the dominant 'white' society. This was the philosophy of assimilation, a philosophy that failed. The Indian people refused to be assimilated, nor did they "die out" as many non-Indians had expected.

Mrs. A.C. Goucher,[4] in her study of school 'dropouts' among the Indian and Metis, described the problem created for these people by the imposition of an educational system that was based upon the interests of a different culture.

Brochet, in 1967, was a community of 600 Indians and 20 whites. It is a remote community located in Northwestern Manitoba close to the Saskatchewan border, and was considered to be, at that time, relatively untouched by 'white' standards of living. The native families supported themselves by fishing and trapping and the family units would leave the community during their working seasons to be with their fathers and husbands. The early school could only function for a short period in each year when the families had returned to the village. Then the whiteman imposed laws forcing all children between the ages of six and sixteen to attend school between September and June (The normal Canadian school year). This broke the traditional patterns of life. The fathers did not want to be away from their families for months at a time and they began to spend less time on the traplines and fishing. Why was the school year established between September and June? The 'white' society in Canada had organized the school year so that the children would be freed from school at the crucial times when they would be needed to raise and harvest the crops. Other countries have established school periods to suit the needs of their societies, but the Indian people had no choice; their needs or traditions were not considered. Was this necessary? Now government officials in Canada are questioning the closing of schools in the summer; It is said that the school year should be reorganized to suit the new needs of society - that it is time to recognize the fact that Canada is no longer a predominantly agricultural society. Why shouldn't the needs and desires of the Indian people be considered; is uniformity necessary?

(4) The Dropout Problem among Indian and Metis Students, by Mrs. A.C. Goucher. DOME PETROLEUM LTD., Calgary, Alberta, 1968. pp.6-7.

What should be the goal of Indian education?

> "The object of Indian education should be to aid the Indian in becoming a responsible citizen adjusted to his environment and a full participant in Canadian life without the necessity of departing from his ancestral heritage."(5)
>
> Edward Cross
> In 1965, a University student from the Caughnawaga Band.

The educational structure must be based on the culture, traditions and values of each Indian Band. Indian people have a unique culture, and each community or tribe its own distinct identity. The educational system, if it is to succeed, must be based upon the Indian child's environment and then expanded to provide the knowledge of the culture or society that surrounds him. From a secure base that provides an understanding of himself, the student can then choose what he wishes to know.

CHURCH INFLUENCE UPON INDIAN EDUCATION

It is hard to consider the influence of the Churches upon Indian education with an impartial mind. In the light of to-day's thinking and attitudes much of the work of the church missionaries and teachers was harmful to the Indian society. Perhaps it is charitable to say they worked among the Indian people with "the very best intentions". Their attitudes reflected the attitudes prevalent in Canadian society in the past, and at that time. But was this enough? Shouldn't they have been aware and sensitive to the needs of the people they wished to serve? One is forced to make generalizations when discussing this question, and therefore bound to be unfair to some who were exceptions to the general rule.

(5) The Education of Indian children in Canada, p.27.

What might be said about the influence of the churches? There is no disputing the fact that the goal of the churches was to essentially destroy the customs and beliefs of the Indian people, to "civilize" them and thus to "improve and elevate" their character. (The words of Dr. Ryerson in 1847).

The church missionaries and teachers brought a new and foreign culture and 'value system' to the Indians. This 'value system' was taught in the schools, and in most cases it contradicted the traditional customs and ideas of the Indian people they were teaching. Each religious sect had its own particular opinions, and each one tried to protect and expand its own role among the Indians in opposition to all other groups. There were five major churches working among the Indians in Canada who were involved in education, and the Indian communities were split by different religious beliefs and loyalties; Anglican vs Roman Catholic; United Church vs Baptist or Presbyterian and so on.

It must be admitted that if the churches had not been involved in education in the past the Indian people would most likely be in even more desperate straits than they are now. The churches made many sacrifices to bring their aid and services to the native people. However, one must also say that their foremost ambition appeared to be the creation of good christians rather than the creation of self-confident, well-educated and ethnically proud Indians. Furthermore, the vast majority of the Indians were expected to live in isolation, far removed from the main body of Canadian society. This view led the missionaries to underemphasize the quality of the educational services they provided and to over emphasize the religious needs. Many teachers lacked adequate training and professional qualifications. Even when the Federal Government accepted increas-

ing responsibility for Indian education through the signing of Treaties and the enactment of special laws (Indian Acts) dealing with Indian matters, it concentrated on financial questions and, in the main, left the operation of the schools in the hands of the religious organizations. It was only in the 1950's that the dominant role of the churches in Indian education began to be reduced as the Federal and Provincial Governments became increasingly involved.

THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Residential or Boarding Schools dominated the system of Indian educatic.. for over 100 years, and the churches controlled these schools. Among the earliest schools in the colony of New France one found residential schools for Indian and non-Indian children. Actually Quebec pioneered the concept of integrating Indian and white children in common schools. But this was the exception to the standard practice that became established in the nineteenth centruy. After the English conquest of the colony, strictly segregated schools became the rule rather than the exception.

The segregation of the Indian people from the white society was carried out for many reasons. An important one was that the missionaries felt that the 'naive' Indian had to be 'protected' from the evil and depraved white men who were constantly threatening to destroy the christian teachings of the missionaries. For over a century the environment surrounding Indian education was overly protective and paternalistic. The majority of the Indian children were isolated from the growing and expanding white society and its educational system. It was also felt to be advisable to separate the Indian students from the 'poor' influence of their home communities, and especially from the influence of their parents. It was also felt that, as the Indians were a nomadic people, resi-

dential schools were essential to provide the education the children were supposed to have. Students were expected to stay at these schools for at least ten months of the year. The residential schools were run by religious groups "who had (in their own opinion) the best idea of the real interests of the Indian people."

What were these schools like? There are a growing number of books, both fictional and factual, that describe the conditions in these schools. In 1847 Dr. Ryerson outlined his idea of the best system for these schools to follow in their educational endeavours. One should be aware from the start that it was believed that industrial or agricultural boarding schools were the type most suited to the requirements of the Indians. This system lasted, to all intents and purposes, until 1950 when finally provincial courses of studies were introduced into the residential school system. But, to return to Dr. Ryerson.(6) He recommended that Indian students should 'labour' for 8 to 12 hours a day in summer time, and study from 2 to 4 hours. In winter the hours of work could be decreased and the studying time increased. He also proposed that the student might be paid a penny a day for his work. However this money would only be paid when the student left the school, and only on the condition that his conduct in school had been acceptable to the authorities. The overriding concern of all the schools was the provision of a religious education; the creation of a "religious feeling" in each student.

What are residential schools like? Again one is impelled to generalize and therefore what is said will apply to all schools. Examples taken from stories, articles and research studies enable one to arrive at some images of the physical environment of these schools. In 1966 there were sixty-six residential schools, and all but three were owned by the Federal Government but run by the churches

(6) The First Indian Residential School, Gambill, J. 1968 pp. 1-2.

(principally Roman Catholic, Anglican and United Church). In the past[7] there was an almost universal tendency to build these institutions in the countryside, away from non-Indian settlements. This contributed to the continuing isolation of the Indian people from Canadian society, and helped to perpetuate the ignorance and prejudice found in the non-Indian community. Furthermore, the schools appeared to try to reduce contacts between the pupils and their parents living on the reserves, even schools established close by the reserves they served.

In 1966 a study[8] was made of the nine residential schools in Saskatchewan and the description of eight of the nine appears to be rather typical of the majority of these schools in Canada - The buildings were designed along the pattern of most orphanages built in Canada in the period leading up to the Second World War. The buildings were designed to care for young people "en masse" and were expected to meet the criteria of efficiency and economy with the minimum use of space. They were three, or more, storeys in each building with large sleeping dormitories (some with room for fifty students sleeping in bunk beds). There was little provision made for storage or locker space for each child and no place for students to find a moment of privacy. Indoor recreational facilities were usually quite limited, though outside, the schools were usually found to be surrounded by quite spacious and nicely landscaped grounds. Meals were commonly served in large cafeteria styled dinning halls. Some of the buildings were wooden and were obvious fire hazards. Apparently the Saskatchewan study found the schools to be very clean and orderly. But it was felt that the only way that this could have been achieved in those buildings was through the use of a major degree of regimentation. In other words a student

(7) Indian Residential Schools - Research study - this was the principal source of information on this aspect of the topic.

(8) Indian Residential Schools; Canadian Welfare Council, Ottawa, 1967.

had to abide by many rules and regulations. This leads to the other side of the picture. What was the atmosphere in these schools?

Once again one is forced to generalize. The style of many of these institutions, their size and layout, meant that many rules and regulations had to be imposed. The students were essentially forced to conform. There was little time to be concerned with the needs of the individual. There was a significant failure to provide an opportunity for individual privacy, to get away from the group. There were relatively few adults responsible for the care of the students, so that in most cases, the young boys or girls had very little opportunity to have the normal adult contacts available to most children. This adult-child relationship potential was weakened even further by the fact that most, if not all, of the school staff were non-Indian and thus quite alien to the majority of their students. Mention has already been made of the great differences in culture and social values between the Indian and non-Indian societies.

The Saskatchewan study also looked at the influence that the non-teaching staff had upon the pupils in the residential schools. Perhaps two things should be mentioned. Since the vast majority of the students are isolated from their parents for most of the year, the "child care staff" are their substitutes and they can become models for the students to follow. A significant percentage of these workers had very little school education and very little training for the special roles they were filling. It is hard to stimulate and encourage a young person to strive for a higher education when he is surrounded and influenced by adults who themselves lack this qualification. Even the teaching staff had a significant number of people with only minimum qualifications. There was another problem in this area, and that was the high rate of turn-over of teaching staff. In Indian schools (including residential) between the years 1956-57 to 1963-64,

there was never less than a 21 per cent turn over of staff annually. In 1963-64 this had reached 29.3 per cent.[9] This lack of continuity compounds the difficulties faced by most Indian students attempting to gain an education in a "foreign" or "alien" culture and language, and, in many instances, in alien surroundings.

Harold Cardinal in his book The Unjust Society[10] said this about the residential schools:

> "They alienated the child from his own family; they alienated him from his own way of life without in anyway preparing him for a different society ----- worst of all, perhaps, the entire misconceived approach, the illogical (to the Indian children) disciplines enforced, failure to relate the new education in any pragmatic way to their lives turned the child against education, prevented him from seeing or appreciating the benefits of a real education."

The role of residential schools is becoming less significant in the whole context of Indian education. In 1939-40 nearly 50 per cent of all Indian students were enrolled in residential schools. By 1963-64 this had dropped to 18 per cent. In the past few years there has been a change in direction in the residential school system. These institutions are changing from that of providing a segregated educational facility for Indian students to becoming hostels or boarding residences for Indian students attending integrated schools in non-Indian communities. Generally speaking, it is now only children who cannot get an education while living at home because of an absence of schools, who are accepted by the residential schools. They also have students in attendance who are sent to these schools because of difficulties or problems in their own homes.

(9) The Education of Indian Children in Canada, p. 40.
(10) Cardinal, H. The Unjust Society, pp. 54-55.

LOCAL SCHOOLS

Local schools, or Reserve or Day Schools, have always existed in the complex educational system created for the Indian people. However, it wasn't until the end of the Second World War that any significant attention was given to the Reserve Schools by the Federal Government.

In the years prior to 1927 most of the effort to provide Day schools on the reserves came from Indian leaders and Band Councils and Church groups. Some of the money already set aside for payment to the Indians was used to establish local schools or pay the salaries of teachers. In 1894 the Federal Government was given the power to create industrial or boarding schools. However, there was no reference about the necessity of establishing schools for children living with their families on the reserves. It has been suggested that perhaps this was thought to be, primarily, a responsibility of the local Indian bands. While some bands had been able to fulfil this need, the majority lacked both leadership and financial resources. The initiative usually lay in the hands of the Church groups.

In 1927 the Federal Government assumed responsibility for meeting the total cost of education for the Indians living on reserve or 'crown lands'. However, its involvement was minimal. The churches continued to dominate the whole area of education, and the residential schools were the most important part of the system. The goal of most Indian schools was to teach the Indian skills so that he could make a living on the reserve. They did not try to equip them to live in the non-Indian society.

After the Second World War the Federal Government finally accepted its full responsibility for Indian education. From 1945 until the late 1950's, the government concentrated on building Indian Day Schools on the reserves. These schools were, and are, primarily involved in elementary education,

though a few offer some high school courses. The proliferation in numbers of local schools has enabled many more Indian children to attend elementary schools. Many parents didn't want to send their young children away into a 'foreign' or strange environment (the residential school) for ten months of the year. This is a feeling that would be shared by most Canadian parents.

Not all Indian children receive their elementary schooling in reserve schools. In 1950 provincial courses of study were begun in Indian schools with the idea of ultimately integrating the Indian and Provincial Educational systems. The Federal Government made arrangements with local and provincial school boards to allow Indian children to attend the local elementary schools. However this arrangement is only applicable to students living on reserves that are situated close to established provincial schools. Furthermore, Indian students can only be sent to these schools with the consent of their parents; and many families are not convinced that this is the best approach to the question of education for their children.

One final point might be made. Most of the 'local or 'Day' schools operating on the reserves provide a 'segregated' or protective environment for their Indian students. Since these schools only provide elementary education, most Indian children, if they want to continue their education, are forced to face a situation unlike that encountered by most other Canadian children. They must integrate into an alien society if they wish to enter high school. They are often a very small minority in the provincial high school; a minority about whom little is known or understood by the majority; a minority that very frequently faces racial prejudice, both open and subtle. Indian students from the remote or more isolated reserves must go to residential schools, hostels or boarding homes in order to continue

their education. Many of them have to travel several hundred miles away from home and live among strangers for ten months of the year. Under these conditions it is not very surprising to see that many Indian students do not continue their education beyond elementary school. (See Chart 6).

BOARDING HOMES

In 1969 some interesting facts were brought to light in a study published by the Education Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs & Northern Development.[11] In 1967 there were 70,500 registered Indian pupils of whom approximately 12,000 were 'boarders'. 2,800 of these boarders were accommodated in private boarding homes and it was estimated that over 80 per cent of these were high school students.

Indian students in boarding homes have many problems to overcome. Not only are they separated from their families and friends, but they are also faced with the difficulties of being 'newcomers' or "outsiders" in their new schools. They are often the only Indian student in their individual classes. In the Department Study it was found that less than 10 per cent of the Indian students had five or more Indian classmates. This can add to the feeling of isolation experienced by many students and serves to heighten "homesickness".

The Indian student boarder has to learn to live in a strikingly new and different family situation. Very often both the student and "boarding home parents" know little about each other, and this can lead to unhappiness and incompatibility. A high percentage of boarding students change homes usually because of this very problem. Even among the

(11) A Study of the Boarding Home Program for Indian High School Students. Researcher & Author, Bessie W. Sniper, Dept. of Indian Affairs & Northern Development, Ottawa, 1969.

students who don't move, many indicate that they never really feel they have established a close relationship with their boarding home family.

Boarding homes provide an important service and they are bound to become increasingly important in the light of the rising Indian secondary and post-secondary school population in the integrated system. Until a better approach is found, they will continue to be used and they will continue to be another problem or situation that Indian students have to learn to cope with.

CHANGE IN THE ATTITUDE TOWARD INDIAN EDUCATION

The end of the Second World War marked a turning point in the position of the Indian society in Canada. The government and the public (in increasing numbers) became aware of the Indian minority in their midst. The Indian communities had become less isolated and their numbers were growing. In fact the Indian community is the fastest growing segment of Canadian society - contacts between the Indian communities and the outside world were increasing. The old policy of isolation was no longer viable. The old educational system or philosophy had helped to perpetuate the Indian people's isolation. It had attempted to train them for life on the reserves and it had failed to prepare them to live in the rapidly expanding technological society of Canada. The paternalistic or protective attitude of the government had robbed the Indians of much of their pride; it had made them feel powerless and dependent upon the 'generosity' of government officials.

A new approach, a new policy or philosophy gradually evolved after 1945. In 1948 a Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons in Ottawa made a detailed study of Indian education. One of the committee's key recommendations

called for the integration of Indian education with that of the non-Indian community. The new policy was based on the premise that the best future for the Indian people lies in their progressive integration with the rest of Canadian society. Indians were now to be considered and treated in the same manner as all other citizens. They were now to receive the same services as other Canadians and to enjoy the same economic opportunities. The Indian people were to be encouraged to become fully responsible for the management of their own affairs. Parents were to be increasingly encouraged to participate in the educational system of their children and to become involved in the decision-making process - i.e. School Boards and Committees. Complete social integration appears to have been the ultimate goal of this philosophy, and school integration was one of the principal means to be used to achieve it.

The Federal Government entered into negotiations with provincial governments and school boards in order to develop this system of integrated schools. The Federal Government agreed to pay for the increased costs of school boards which would accept Indian students. Indian parents were and are being continually encouraged to send their children to joint schools. High school courses are, to all intents and purposes, mainly available in the integrated schools. The educational role of the residential schools is being slowly phased out. Pre-school and kindergarten classes have been introduced, partly as a result of the belated realization of the major problems faced by Indian children beginning school at the Grade 1 Level.

PRE-SCHOOL AND KINDGERGARTEN EDUCATION

It wasn't until 1951, after the revision of the Indian Act, that any serious concern arose in government circles over the necessity to extend educational services to children of pre-school or kindergarten age. Up until that time the

Indian Act defined a "child" for educational purposes, as being between the ages of 6 and 17. Kindergarten classes were not really introduced until after 1961-62. In that year there were only three full-time teachers and one part-time teacher in the whole kindergarten program. By 1963-64 there were 17 full-time and 17 part-time teachers[12] and 3,575 children enrolled in pre-grade one classes in Federal schools.

Most Indian children enter school for the first time with major difficulties or handicaps that are not faced by most Canadian-born children. The lack of any pre-school or kindergarten training or experience compounded these difficulties.

What are some of these problems? The educational system is based upon the culture and values of the dominant non-Indian society, and these are alien to most Indian children. White society is a 'verbal society," a "talking society" while silence is a virtue in Indian society. The Indians have a tradition of using illustrations rather than words to express ideas or themselves. As a hunting society silence was a necessity in order to provide for their basic needs. Speeches and story-telling were saved for special times or occasions. In school teachers depend largely on the use of verbal or written instructions. The white society is individualistic, competitive and acquisitive where as many Indian cultures have a tradition of sharing, and of group involvement. There is often great pressure on the non-Indian child to learn and from his earliest childhood he is constantly being "taught" by his parents. For many Indian children, there is little pressure to 'learn' as such, and accordingly he learns by watching the family and people around him. The Indian child has more autonomy and is less controlled by his elders than the non-Indian child. Discipline in many Indian families is seemingly

(12) The Education of Indian Children in Canada, p. 40.

loose and minimal demands are made upon the small children. However the older child is expected to help around the home and to even help provide for the necessities of the family. The non-Indian child is usually brought up in a protected yet disciplined environment. When he is older his major responsibility is to achieve an education and he is faced with far fewer family responsibilities. 'Routine' and 'time' are significant elements in the non-Indian society, while the opposite condition exists in many Indian societies.

These are just a few very generalized statements about the contrasts between Indian and non-Indian societies, and all of them are involved in the learning situation. In Canadian schools a child must know how to express his ideas in words; he must be disciplined in his behaviour; he must follow school routines; he must be competitive; he must accept control by others. This is alien to the experience of most Indian children. They need pre-school programs to help them cope with these new demands and problems.

There is another major problem faced by many Indian children when they begin school. That problem is the matter of language. The Indian School Regulations require Federal Indian schools to follow the course of studies used by the province in which the various schools are situated. Therefore the official language of instruction will be either English or French. In a language survey[13] of Indian school beginners in 1962 it was found that 25 per cent of all 'beginners' between the ages of five and eight had no knowledge of either French or English. 13 per cent could understand some English or French, and another 19 per cent could speak "some English or French." Thus 57 per cent of Indian children entering school for the first time had very little, if any, understanding of the basic language of instruction. The belated introduction of pre-school or kindergarten classes has helped to improve this situation, but these are not

(13) The Education of Indian Children in Canada, p. 76.

available to all children. There is still the necessity for Indian children to make an extra effort in order to understand his school subjects.

Within recent months the pre-school program has been seriously cut back by lack of Federal funding. Various native womer's organizations have developed in an attempt to pressure government to re-institute and expand this program. Some native women have organized pre-school programs on their own initiative in order to carry forward what has thus far been an effective program.

INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

Integrated schools, that is the mixing of Indian and non-Indian students, exist in all provinces and involve children in all grade levels. The majority of Indian children in secondary or high schools are in integrated schools (See Chart 5). However, while the number of children in Federal schools in grades 1 to 6 has remained fairly constant (See chart 6) (about 24,500) the number of children in non-Federal schools has increased by 50 per cent since 1963-64. In grades 7 and 8 the balance is swinging in favour of the non-Federal schools, and in high school the numbers are overwhelmingly in favour of the non-Federal systems. The principal reason for the last figures is that the Federal government had undertaken a deliberate intensification of the policy of integrating Indian education with non-Indian at the high school level. Local, (or Reserve) schools are discouraged from offering secondary school subjects.

Most of the integrated schools are part of the provincial educational systems, and generally speaking they have provided a higher standard of teaching than what was formally available to Indian children. These schools have also generally been able to offer the Indian pupil a better variety of secondary

and vocational school subjects. Post-secondary education is also provided through integration in the non-Indian educational system.

The acceleration of the policy of using integrated or joint schools in the 1950's meant that there was more room made for beginning students in the Indian school system. In 1950 there was only room in the Indian schools for two-thirds of the school population between the ages of 7 and 16.(14) Furthermore, very few students managed to reach the secondary school level. In 1939-40 there were no Indian students enrolled in Grades 10 to 13. In 1967-68 there were 5,967 students enrolled in grades 9 to 13. In the school years between 1953-54 and 1963-64 there was an over all increase of 182 per cent in the number of Indian students enrolled in grades 9 to 13. There has not been the same sharp rise in Indian students enrolled in post-secondary education (see chart 2). However, the growth of numbers is a quantitative improvement. One might ask if there has been a similar qualitative change. Has the quality and standard of education received by Indian students also improved 182 per cent or more?

Integration has brought inconvenience and problems to many Indian parents. It is their children who have to be "bused" long distances to schools, or who have had to leave home and live in boarding homes or residential schools. Many parents dread the thought of their children going to the integrated or residential schools, or into boarding homes. They feel, in the latter case, that the family ties or relationships will be broken; that they will lose their children. Even the "busing" of children has weakened the family bonds, for the integrated schools indoctrinate the children with the value system of the 'white' or 'European' society, and

(14) The Education of Indian Children in Canada, p. 70.

(15) Ibid. pp.54-57.

especially with the middle class value system that predominates in Canadian society. The parents worry that their children will lose their respect for the culture and traditions of their ancestors.

There is also the problem of obtaining employment on the reserves once the students have graduated. Many students who have received a higher education realize that, unless they want to be a farmer, rancher, fisherman, teacher or, perhaps, Government employee, they will most likely have to live off the reserves. There is little economic opportunity for the majority of the people to earn a reasonable income on most of the reserves. Every year there is an increasing percentage of Indian people who are living in the non-Indian communities outside the reserves (See Annual Report 1971 IEA Chart 1).

When an Indian child first goes to an integrated school off the reserve he is quickly made aware of his minority status in Canadian society.

> "In a non-Indian school for the first time, the Indian high school student becomes aware of his social inferiority ....."
>
> Howard E. Staats.
> In 1965 a Law Student from the Six Nations Band, Ontario (16)

Racial discrimination is often first encountered, or perhaps first recognized, when an Indian student attends an integrated school. It takes time to eradicate prejudices that have persisted through ignorance, or that have been fostered by badly written and biased text books.

Integration has brought the Indian people increasingly out of their isolation. The non-Indian society is forced to face a people that they almost destroyed by neglect and deceit. The Indian society is becoming increasingly vocal

(16) Education for the Indian in Canada, p. 60.

and visible, and is successfully challenging the patronizing and arrogant attitudes of the non-Indian community. They have resisted absorption and assimilation by the dominant society for over two hundred years and they have no intention of succumbing now. Integration has brought the increasing involvement of the Indian parent with the education of his child. The lack of parental concern and interest has discouraged many Indian pupils from continuing to struggle through the complexities of the Indian educational system.

THE PROBLEM OF SCHOOL DROPOUTS

The problem of school "dropouts" is common to all societies in varying degrees. There have always been a percentage of students who fail to graduate from the school system. However, Indian students 'drop out' of school at an extremely high rate. The largest drop in school attendance figures appears between the administrative divisions of the Indian school system. This is the point at which students have to go to another school in order to continue their education. The most significant place where 'dropouts' occur is at the end of the elementary school system. It is often at this stage that the accessibility of the next school becomes more complicated (See chart 4 or 7).

In 1964-65 the national rate of dropouts for non-Indian students was about 12 per cent. In a study done at that time it was discovered that in a period of twelve years, from 1951 to 1962, 8,441 Indian students out of a total of 8,782, failed to complete high school.[17] Even among students starting high school, having survived the drop-out point after elementary school, a high percentage fail to graduate. In 1961-62 there were 1,681 Indian students enrolled in grade 9.

(17) A survey of the contemporary Indians of Canada, Part 2 p. 130.

By 1963-64 there were only 620 students enrolled in grade 11, less than half of those who had entered high school three years before.

The cultural conflict faced by Indian students is a major obstacle to success in school. Because the system is essentially based on an alien culture much of what he is taught is in conflict with his early home experience. Very often the language of instruction is not familiar to him and the routine and discipline of the school appears unnatural and even incomprehensible. Many Indian children become defeated before they have hardly even begun their schooling; frustration grows as success appears to be increasingly unlikely. His hopes that schooling will help him achieve a better life become dashed on the rocks of failure. He is likely, then, to lose confidence in himself and to lose his sense of personal worth. This problem can be intensified by the conscious, or unconscious, denegration of his Indian history in school texts. Canadian students learn of settlers or missionaries who were 'massacred' or "martyred" at the hands of the Indians. On the other hand one seldom reads of Indians being massacred by the white man. It is not too hard to think of many similar examples. This shows, once again, how hard it is for an Indian child, (in the Canadian school system) to retain a sense of pride in his heritage.

There are many aspects to the problem of school dropouts and only a few have been mentioned here. The issues are too complex to do full justice to them at this time. It is important to recognize the problem exists and to try to understand some of the reasons for it. Some of the basic reasons have been discussed already, the problems inherent in the Indian school system; that is the necessity of shifting from ones own community and familiar surroundings to a new and sometimes alien environment; the fact that the Indian student is often part of a very small minority in the integrated school.

The Indian student is often faced with adverse living conditions at home which may severly hinder his chances of success in school. Many homes lack electricity and privacy for studying. In some homes children do not have any breakfast before they have to go to school. These, of course, are problems of poverty and many Indian people (too many) suffer all the myriad problems of the poor. Many parents lack the education which would enable them to help their children with their studies and to stimulate them to continue with their education. Indian students have frequently mentioned the lack of support from their parents as a reason for dropping out of school. This conflict between home and school is a serious one for a young student to cope with. He is often faced with the fear of his parents that his schooling will create a wall between his parents and himself.

This has been a rather brief look at the complex educational system of the Indian people in Canada. In closing it might be worthwhile to raise some questions.

Integrated schools are good, but are they fulfilling the Indian's needs? The answer to that must be "No". A glance at government figures showing school and university attendance for succeeding years supports this answer (Chart 2 or 4). The funds spent on Indian education have risen quite rapidly but the percentages of Indian children attaining a higher level of education have improved very slowly. The drop-out rate after elementary school is still extremely high.

How can a child believe in an education if his surroundings discourage its achievement. The economic levels and housing standards on most Indian reserves are far below the Canadian average. It has been shown over and over again, in

study after study, that poverty begets poverty and this applies to people and communities. How much more difficult it must be for the Indian people to break out of this vicious circle with so many of them trapped on uneconomic and isolated reserves; ignored or rejected by the dominant society; their culture, history and traditions challenged on every side.

How can a child be expected to succeed with so many obstacles to overcome; language difference; alien culture; ignorance and prejudice even among those who are supposed to help him, his teachers. In school his history is usually distorted; his art patronized, the achievements of his ancestors virtually ignored.

To be a fulfilled human being, man has to have a feeling of self-worth and of self-confidence. For many Indian children school is something to be endured. Failure is with him almost from the start; he fails to live up to the expectations of his teacher and of his peers, and of himself. And, what is perhaps even more serious, he often senses that he is expected to fail; that no one is <u>really</u> surprised when he doesn't succeed. In essence, he is defeated before he has even begun.

One thing that is needed are models of success that the Indian student can respect and try to follow; people of his own culture who have succeeded. If time was taken in the schools tc teach about the rich history, culture and traditions of the many Indian tribes in Canada and about the problems they face to-day; it would help both Indian and non-Indian to understand each other better. There is ignorance and prejudice on both sides. It is said, that only when an individual understands himself, can he then understand others.

Generally speaking, the present approach of the educational and social system appears to force an Indian student to make a choice; that is, to succeed and turn his back on his community and adopt the "white man's ways" or to fail, and remain with his family and community. These are choices no one should have to make. Conditions on the reserves must be radically improved; improved housing standards and health care; improved nutrition and an improved standard of living. The reserves should be able to provide opportunities for their people to satisfy their needs. When people are struggling to exist they have little time to spend on artistic or intellectual pursuits. Leisure is a luxury they cannot afford.

The Indian people must not be given equal educational opportunities, they must be better, for they have to catch up with so many lost opportunities and with so much lost time. Adult education must be intensified because it is the adults who have been deprived by the old attitudes and policies that prevailed prior to the 1950's. The adults want to, and must, assume responsibility for <u>making</u> policy decisions that affect the lives of their children and the future of their communities. They must have the right to sit on school boards and to participate in policy making. Old policies and values will be challenged. and re-examined in the light of the Indian people's <u>own</u> assessment of their needs.

> "Either we continue our attempts to integrate the Indians into our society by negating his own, or we integrate by cooperation, by recognition and a purposeful acceptance of where the Indian came from, his present state, and where he wants to go." (18)

(18) Thecla Bradshaw and Father André Renaud, <u>The Indian Child and Education</u>, p.3.

In the summer of 1971 the House of Commons Committee on Indian Affairs issued a report with new and far-reaching recommendations. The report was based on numerous briefs presented by native organizations.

While the recommendations are positive and have been welcomed by most native leaders the initial response of government has been sluggish. Looking forward to 1972 native leaders are not optimistic concerning the implementation of the house committee recommendations and past experience, experience with government does little to encourage a positive view.

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CHART 1

INDIAN CHILDREN IN SPECIAL CLASSES & ABSENT FROM THE RESERVE ARE NOT INCLUDED

SOURCE - CANADA YEARBOOKS 1968 - P. 215
1969 - P. 190, 348.

——— % OF INDIAN CHILDREN IN GRADES 9 TO 13 IN RELATION TO TOTAL INDIAN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

– – – – % OF NON-INDIAN CHILDREN IN GRADES 9 TO 13 IN RELATION TO TOTAL NON-INDIAN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

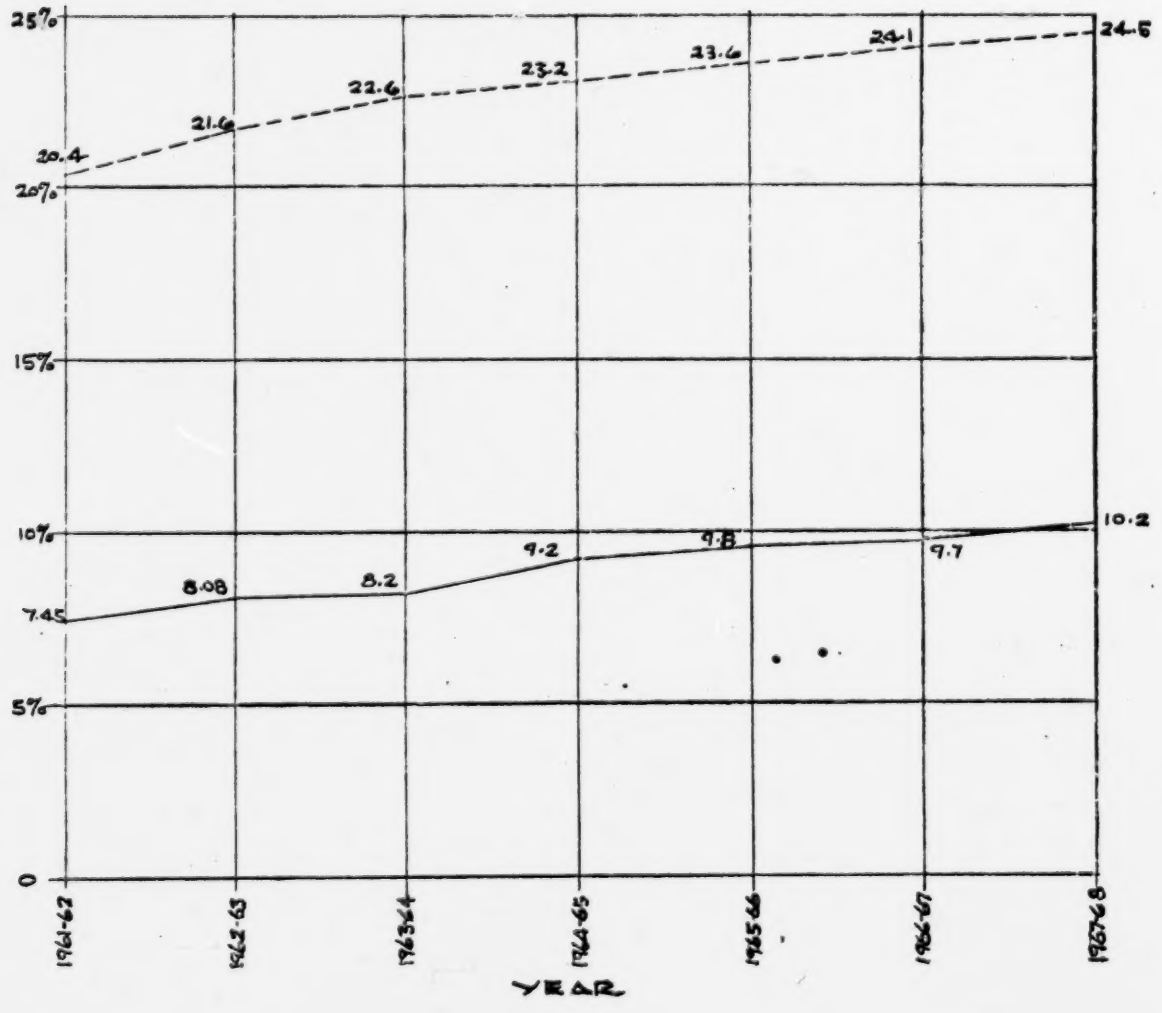


CHART 2

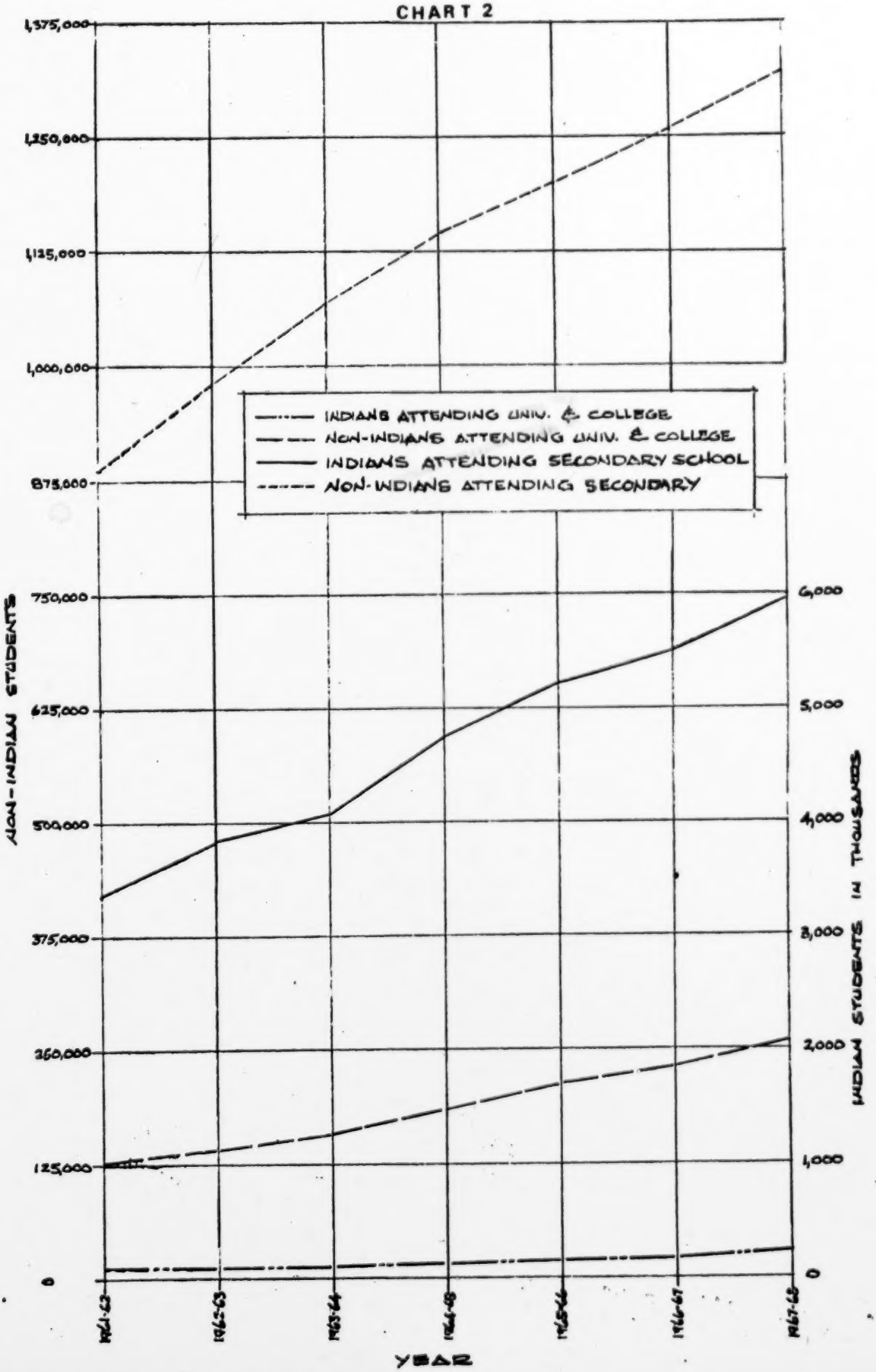

1,375,000
1,250,000
1,125,000
1,000,000
875,000
750,000
625,000
500,000
375,000
250,000
125,000
0
NON-INDIAN STUDENTS
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
INDIAN STUDENTS IN THOUSANDS
INDIANS ATTENDING UNIV. & COLLEGE
NON-INDIANS ATTENDING UNIV. & COLLEGE
INDIANS ATTENDING SECONDARY SCHOOL
NON-INDIANS ATTENDING SECONDARY
1961-62
1962-63
1963-64
1964-65
1965-66
1966-67
1967-68
YEAR

CHART 3

Excerpt from:

CANADA YEAR BOOK 1972

Pages 205-208

Section 3.—The Native Peoples of Canada*

The Indians

The 244,023 persons registered as Indians by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development are persons who are entitled to be so registered in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Act. They are grouped for the most part into 558 bands and occupy or have access to 2,200 reserves having a combined area of 6,231,174 acres, distributed among the provinces as shown in Table 1. The 29 Indian bands in the Yukon and Northwest Territories are located in 59 settlements that have not been formally designated as reserves, and no permanent residents of Newfoundland are registered under the Indian Act.

* Prepared by the Indian-Eskimo Bureau, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa.

1.—Number of Indian Bands, Reserves and Settlements, and Area of Lands in which Bands have a Recorded Interest, by Province, as at Mar. 31, 1971

Province or Territory	Bands	Reserves	Approximate Area[1]	Settlements
	No.	No.	acres	No.
Prince Edward Island	1	4	1,646	—
Nova Scotia	12	38	27,158	—
New Brunswick	15	22	37,803	—
Quebec	39	26	180,981	13
Ontario	110	165	1,586,027	5
Manitoba	54	99	529,405	—
Saskatchewan	67	133	1,389,087	—
Alberta	41	91	1,621,538	8
British Columbia	190	1,622	857,529	—
Yukon Territory	13	—	—	27
Northwest Territories	16	—	—	32
Totals	558	2,200	6,231,174	85

[1] Approximate; mainly based on unverified land data. Includes land surrendered for sale but not sold and land surrendered for lease but excludes acreage of Indian settlements as these are not reserves within the meaning of the Indian Act.

2.—Indian Population, by Province, Selected Years 1949-69

NOTE.—Figures for 1949, 1954 and 1959 resulted from a departmental census taken every five years until 1959; those for 1961-69 are taken from data kept for administrative purposes by the Indian Affairs Branch.

Province or Territory	1949	1954	1959	1961	1963	1965	1967	1969
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Prince Edward Island	273	272	311	318	374	393	409	432
Nova Scotia	2,641	3,002	3,561	3,716	3,935	4,099	4,287	4,524
New Brunswick	2,139	2,629	3,183	3,397	3,629	3,824	4,039	4,280
Quebec	15,970	17,574	20,433	21,793	23,013	24,446	25,650	26,985
Ontario	34,571	37,255	42,668	44,942	47,260	49,556	51,731	54,072
Manitoba	17,549	19,684	23,658	25,681	27,778	29,996	32,227	34,422
Saskatchewan	16,308	18,750	23,280	25,334	27,672	30,086	32,579	35,072
Alberta	12,915	15,715	19,287	20,931	22,738	24,587	26,110	28,343
British Columbia	27,936	31,086	36,229	38,616	40,990	43,250	45,152	46,955
Yukon Territory	1,443	1,568	1,868	2,006	2,142	2,292	2,477	2,661
Northwest Territories	3,772	4,023	4,598	4,915	5,235	5,569	5,911	6,277
Totals	126,197	151,558	179,125	191,709	204,758	218,098	230,902	244,023

Administration.—Pursuant to the British North America Act, the administration of Indian affairs, which had been under the management of several provinces, came under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada in 1867. From January 1950 to December 1965, Indian affairs were the responsibility of a Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. By legislation passed in 1966 (RSC 1970, c. I-7) a new department was formed whereby the Indian Affairs Branch joined with part of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources to become the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This Department is composed of a headquarters staff at Ottawa, eight regional offices, and a varying number of district offices and field agencies. Attached to the headquarters and regional and district offices are specialists in such matters as education, economic and resource development, community affairs, social assistance, and engineering and construction.

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIVE PEOPLES
277 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario

CHART 4

INDIAN CHILDREN IN SPECIAL CLASSES & ABSENT FROM THE RESERVE ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THESE FIGURES

SOURCE - CANADA YEARBOOKS 1968 - P 215
1963 - P 190

——— % OF INDIAN CHILDREN ATTENDING NON-FEDERAL SCHOOLS WHO ARE IN GRADES 9 TO 13

- - - - % OF INDIAN CHILDREN ATTENDING FEDERAL SCHOOLS WHO ARE IN GRADES 9 TO 13

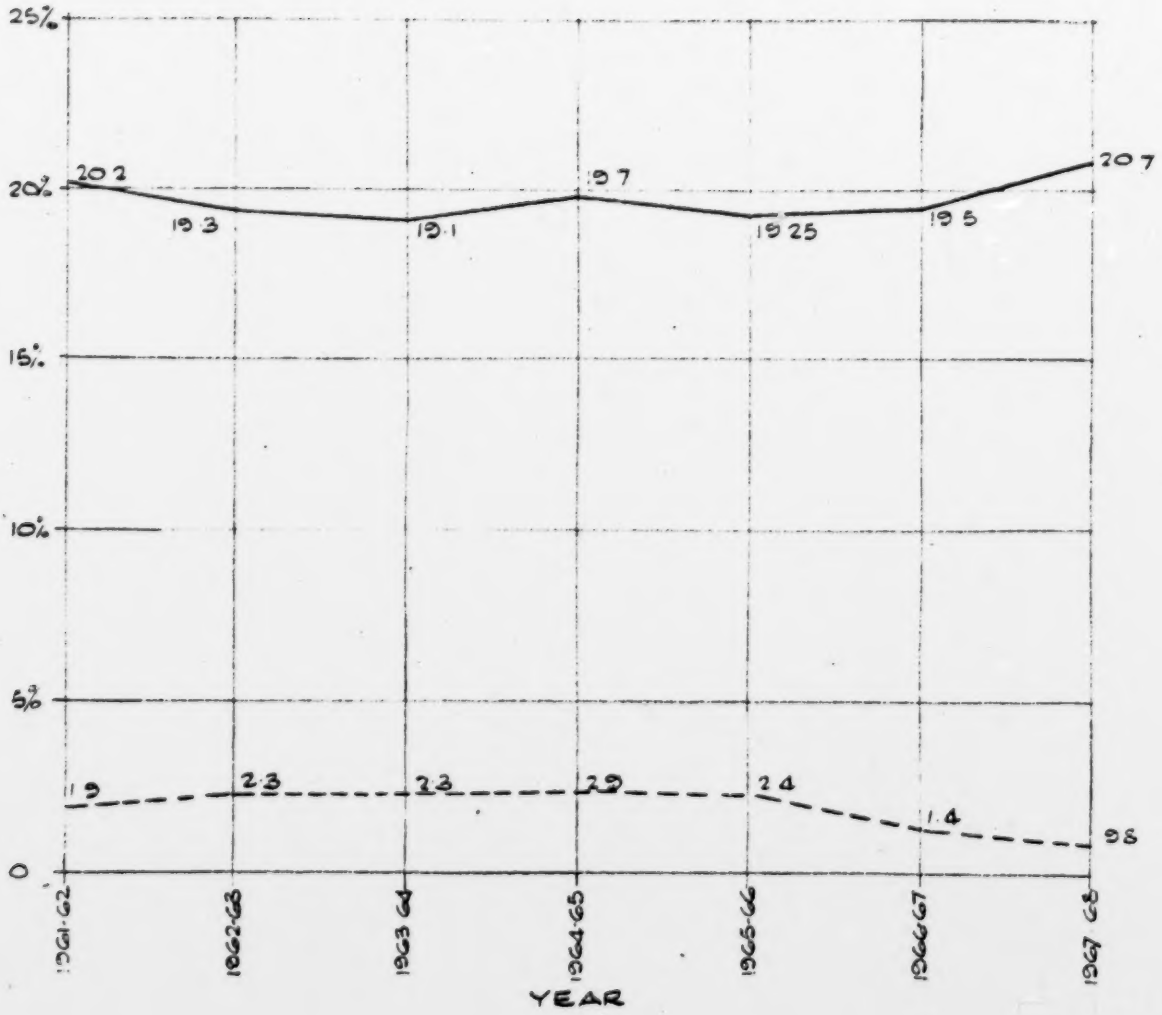


CHART 5

ENROLEMENT OF INDIAN PUPILS IN GRADES 9-13 IN PROVINCIAL OR NON-FEDERAL SCHOOLS AND FEDERAL SCHOOLS

NON-FEDERAL

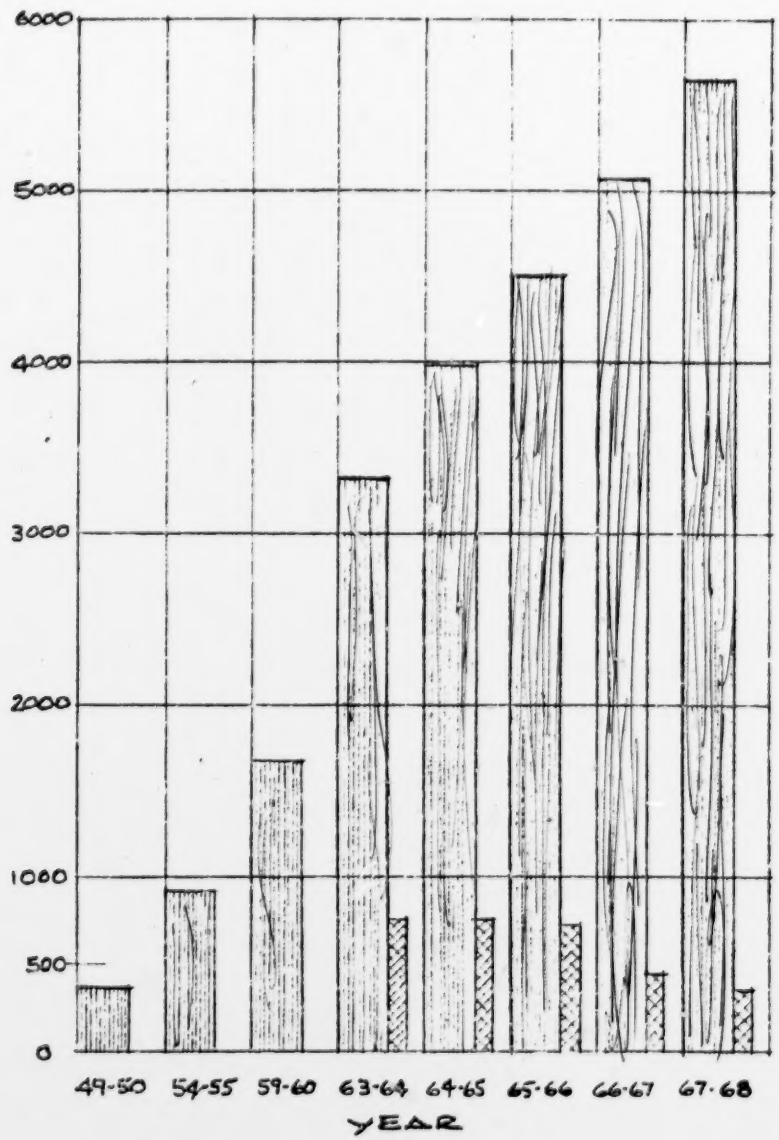
FEDERAL

SOURCES

CANADA YEAR BOOK 1969

THE CANADIAN SUPERINTENDENT 1965 P. 70

THE EDUCATION OF INDIAN CHILDREN IN CANADA



N.B.

1968 FIGURES EXCLUDE YUKON AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES INCLUDE SOME NON-INDIAN PUPILS.

CHART 6

ENROLEMENT OF INDIAN PUPILS IN ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS CLASSIFIED BY TYPE OF SCHOOL AND BY GRADE

SPECIAL STUDENTS AND THOSE ABSENT FROM RESERVES ARE EXCLUDED.

1967-68 FIGURES

1) FEDERAL INCLUDES 1,231 NON-INDIAN PUPILS

2) NON-FEDERAL EXCLUDES 2,169 YUKON AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PUPILS

STATISTICS CANADA YEAR BOOK NO. 37, 1969, P. 190

FEDERAL

NON-FEDERAL

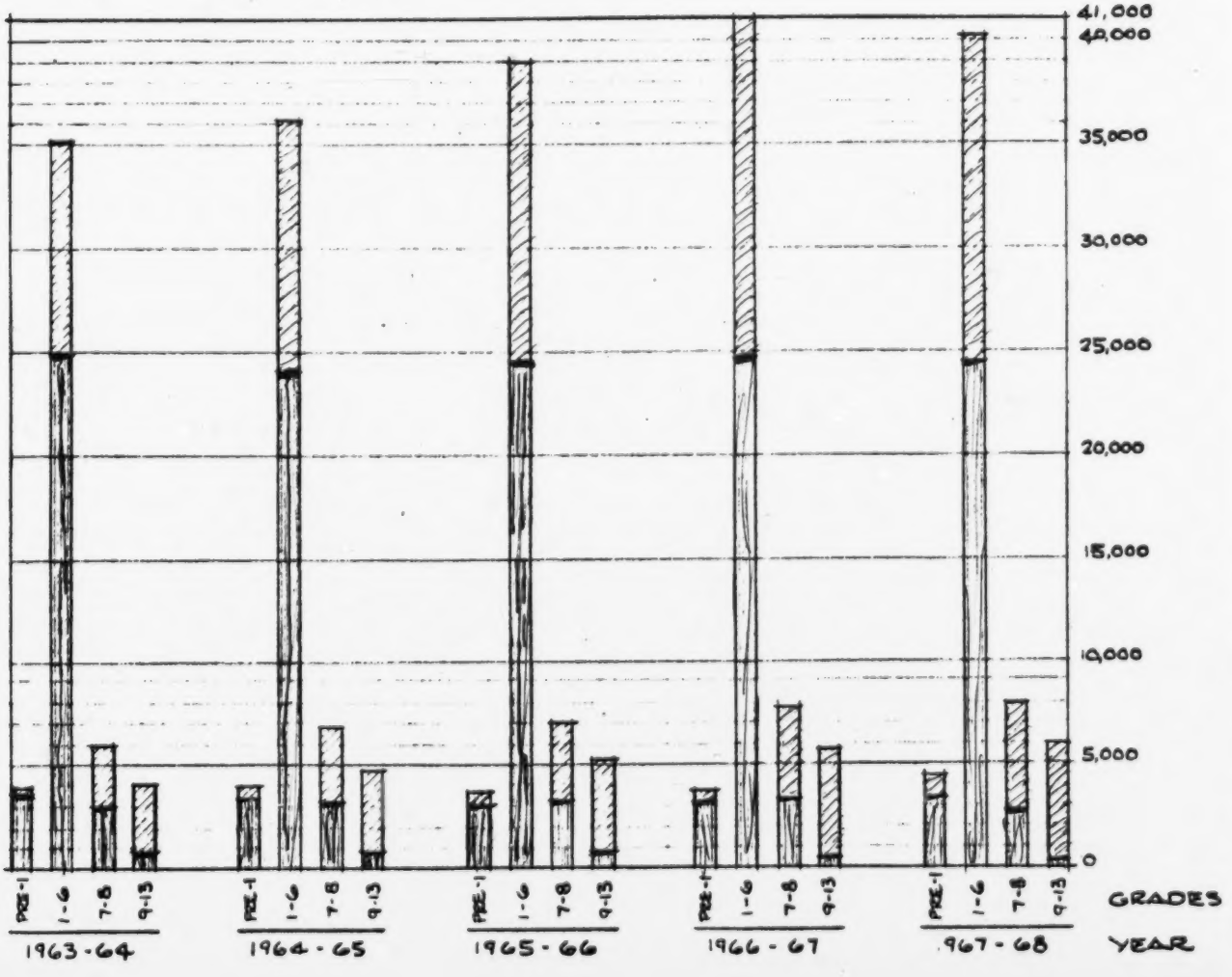
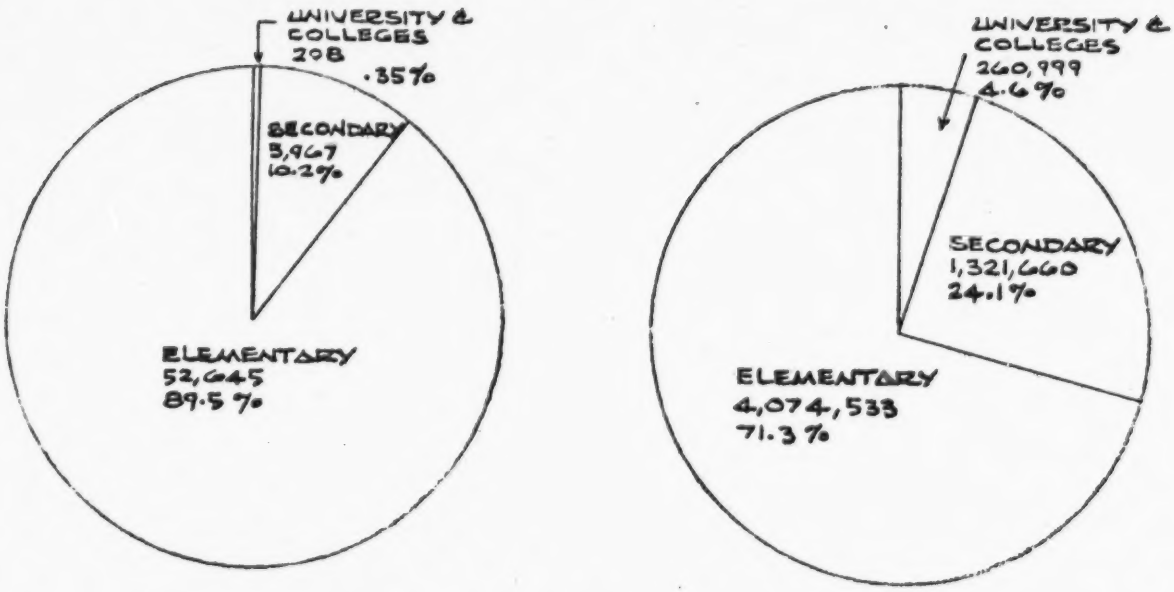


CHART 7

INDIAN 1967-68 NON-INDIAN



ELEMENTARY — KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 8
SECONDARY — GRADES 9 TO 13
UNIVERSITY — UNIVERSITY
NURSES TRAINING
TEACHERS TRAINING

SOURCE - CANADA YEARBOOK
1969 P. 190, 191

SOURCE - CANADA YEARBOOK
1969 - P. 348